



NEWS RELEASE

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BLM releases environmental assessment on proposed Sutey Ranch land exchange

SILT, Colo. – Today the Bureau of Land Management released a preliminary environmental assessment for public comment on the proposed Sutey Ranch land exchange in Eagle, Garfield and Pitkin counties.

The environmental assessment and details about the potential land exchange are available at <http://on.doi.gov/17pFlkj>. The preliminary EA includes a detailed analysis of the environmental and economic aspects of this proposal.

Under the proposal, BLM would acquire the 557-acre Sutey Ranch adjacent to the popular Red Hill Special Recreation Area in Garfield County, including the historic water rights from the ranch. BLM would also receive 112 acres in Pitkin County along Prince Creek Road adjacent to The Crown area. This private parcel is a highly popular area with mountain bikers and is used to access BLM roads and trails.

The BLM would exchange three parcels totaling 1,268 acres in Pitkin County south of Carbondale that are mostly surrounded by private land and are difficult for the public to access. These parcels would be transferred to the Two Shoes Ranch. In Eagle County, BLM would exchange three parcels totaling 201 acres on Horse Mountain that has little public access. These parcels are southwest of Eagle, Colo., and would be transferred to the Horse Mountain Habitat, LLC.

Conservation easements preventing development from occurring on the lands that would become private would be placed simultaneously at closing by Two Shoes Ranch and Horse Mountain Habitat, LLC. The land exchange proponents would also contribute a \$1.1 million donation – \$100,000 to cover the BLM's cost to develop a site-specific management plan for the newly acquired parcels, and \$1 million for their long-term management.

“The BLM will only complete a land exchange if it is in the public's interest,” said BLM Colorado River Valley Field Manager Steve Bennett. “We've taken a broad range of interests into account as part of the detailed analysis in this preliminary EA. We want to hear any issues or concerns from the public, particularly specific to the analysis in the EA.”

After the public comment period closes, BLM will review the comments and make a final decision on the exchange proposal. BLM expects to make a decision later this year.

“It’s important to remember that the acreages involved in BLM land exchanges are based on the appraised value of the lands involved – they are not straight acre-for-acre exchanges,” Bennett said.

BLM will accept comments through May 29, 2013. Comments can be e-mailed to BLM_CO_SI_CRVFO_Webmail@blm.gov or mailed to BLM, 2300 River Frontage Road, Silt, CO 81652, Attn: Sutey Ranch Land Exchange.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

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